New catering policy

2084. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any new catering policy in the Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether his Ministry is taking any steps to keep reasonable prices of the meals being served by the department in various trains of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) Railways' catering policy was last revised in December, 2005. Thereafter, no new catering policy has been issued. Generally contracts for bigger catering units are awarded through two-packet tender system, and other units by calling applications. The tenure of these contracts ranges from three to nine years. Prices of standard meals, tea/coffee and breakfast are fixed by Ministry of Railways taking into account the cost of raw materials, fuel, staff cost, packaging etc. Menu and tariff of a-la-carte food itms are decided by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Zonal Railways in a similar fashion. These prices are considered reasonable. Regular watch is kept to ensure that the catering licensees do not overcharge the passengers while selling standard and a-la-carte food items at stations and on trains. Acton is taken against the licensees found overcharging railway passengers.

Employees from J & K in construction programme

2085. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of employees belonging to Jammu and Kashmir State in railway construction programme; and

(b) why preference is not given to the local people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) About 68% of employees of various agencies involved in construction belong to J&K State.

(b) Adequate preference is given to the local people for employment in the project related works.

Freight corridor

2086. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Delhi-Mumbai freight corridor has created problem for Centre as the Japan Bank of International Co-operation has informally told his Ministry that it is not keen to finance the new corridor that consultants would need an extra expenditure of Rs. 28,000 crores;

(b) whether the Delhi-Mumbai corridor is expected to connect strongly the vast northern Indian hinterland with the big ports in and around Mumbai; and

(c) if so, what are other main reasons for the delay and by when final decision of the Delhi-Mumbai corridor is to be considered?